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Please amend the application as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 17 and 21 as follows.

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*1 - 16. (Withdrawn)*

17. (Once Amended / Currently Amended) An A variable axis immersion lens assembly for use with a charged particle beam comprising:

a deflection coil located coaxial to the beam which deflection coil is used to shift the axis of the electron beam;

an excitation coil located coaxial to the deflection coil;

a first pole piece located coaxial to the excitation coil, the first pole piece extending at least partly around the excitation coil;

a magnetic field shield located coaxial to and downstream with regard to propagation of the beam from the deflection coil;

a support for a target of the charged particle beam and downstream with regard to propagation of the beam from the ferrite magnetic field shield, wherein the magnetic field shield is located intermediate the deflection coil and the support, thereby limiting a magnetic field generated by the deflection coil from radiating downstream from the magnetic field shield into areas protected by the magnetic field shield.

18. (Original) The immersion lens assembly of Claim 17, wherein the first pole piece is of iron.

19. (Original) The immersion lens assembly of Claim 17, further comprising a second pole piece located coaxial to the deflection coil, the second pole piece extending at least partly around the deflection coil.

20. (Original) The immersion lens assembly of Claim 19, wherein the second pole piece is of ferrite.

21. (Once Amended / Currently Amended) The immersion lens assembly of Claim 17, wherein the magnetic field shield is located such that its an upper surface of the magnetic field shield is at least approximately parallel to a magnetic equipotential surface of a magnetic field generated by the excitation coil.

22. (Original) The immersion lens assembly of Claim 17, wherein the magnetic field shield is of ferrite.

23. (Original) The immersion lens assembly of Claim 17, further comprising a detector located intermediate the magnetic field shield and the support for the target.

24. (Original) The immersion lens assembly of Claim 17, wherein the support for the target is of non-magnetic and electrically conductive material.

25 - 29. (Withdrawn)